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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Sixtieth session

Summary record of the 1281st meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 19 February 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Hayashi

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Ecuador (CEDAW/C/ECU/8-9; CEDAW/C/ECU/Q/8-9 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Ecuador took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador), introducing the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Ecuador (CEDAW/C/ECU/8-9), said that the composition of the delegation testified to genuine equality of access to political participation and decision-making positions. Ecuador had come a long way in the area of women's rights thanks to a collective process involving women's organizations, civil society and the State. Ecuador had adopted a new Constitution in 2008, based on the principle of harmonious coexistence among different communities and the environment. The Constitution recognized the rights to formal and substantive equality and non-discrimination, rights that were enforced through a range of policies and programmes, including the National Development Plan.

3. Another important step forward had been the promulgation of a law establishing the Council on Gender Equality as the mechanism responsible for formulating and monitoring public policies and laws for the advancement of women. Efforts were being made to further strengthen the capacity of the Council, but it had already conducted a national survey on family relations and gender violence, created a satellite account to calculate the contribution to the economy of women's unpaid work, and drawn up the National Agenda for Women and Gender Equality 2013–2017.

4. The National Assembly, meanwhile, had adopted measures for the legal protection of women's rights on an equal basis with men, including laws providing for the implementation of the Convention and regulations on sexual harassment, equal political participation and sexism in the media.

5. The revised Criminal Code of August 2014 classified acts of hatred or discrimination on grounds of sex or sexual orientation as offences and set penalties for offenders. Domestic, physical, sexual and psychological violence against women were also considered offences. Special courts and units for violence against women had been established within the justice system and judges had received appropriate training. Femicide was punishable under the Code and protocols for the investigation of violent deaths among women had been implemented, leading to the first conviction for femicide in December 2014.

6. Special units had been set up in the Attorney-General's Office to investigate and advise on cases of sexual and domestic violence. Victims, particularly those with low incomes, were offered judicial protection by the Public Defender Service and had access to a network of care centres and shelters, which had been given increased funding by the Ministry of Justice in 2015. Moreover, the Ministry of the Interior provided an emergency response to cases of violence against women, through community police units.

7. The gender perspective had been incorporated in many of the objectives, policies and guidelines of the National Development Plan, whose implementation was covered by two key instruments, the Guide to Sectoral Public Policies and the Atlas of Socioeconomic Inequalities. Other important instruments included an online information system set up to raise awareness of human rights among State officials and the general public. It contained all international human rights treaties ratified by Ecuador and the concluding observations and recommendations of treaty bodies. In addition to the Council on Gender Equality, there

were gender mechanisms in all three branches of government. In November 2014, the National Agreement to Combat Gender Violence had been signed to coordinate the efforts of all branches of government to eradicate violence against women.

8. With regard to women in vulnerable situations, she said that in June 2012 the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had launched a campaign entitled "*Gracias, Ecuador*" ("Thank you, Ecuador"), in recognition of the country's openness to refugees. As to women deprived of their liberty, in February 2015 there had been around 1,600 female detainees, all of whom had been granted access to sexual and reproductive health services, legal advisory services and distance learning programmes. In January 2015, the Government had adopted a comprehensive policy on sexual and gender diversity.

9. The Public Service Organization Act and the Plurinational Plan to Eliminate Racial Discrimination and Ethnic and Cultural Exclusion provided for temporary special measures to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and women in public authorities and institutions. Women were well represented in the National Electoral Council, Electoral Court and National Court of Justice.

10. In response to recommendations from the Committee, Ecuador had undertaken to change discriminatory social and cultural patterns and tackle gender stereotypes and prejudices, not least through the establishment of the National Plan to Eradicate Gender Violence against Women, Children and Adolescents. The Government also monitored drug rehabilitation clinics to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons from discriminatory practices, and prosecuted anyone found to have violated human rights.

11. As part of efforts to prevent human trafficking, bilateral agreements had been signed with neighbouring countries and training had been provided to State officials, police officers and public prosecutors through the national plan to combat human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, sexual, labour and other forms of exploitation, and prostitution of women, children and adolescents, child pornography and corruption of minors. Offences committed under duress by victims of trafficking were not punishable under the Criminal Code.

12. The Government guaranteed the right of women to vote and participate in public and political life on an equal footing with men. Significant progress had been made with regard to the representation of women in the National Assembly, the diplomatic service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility. Under article 6 of the Constitution, women also had an equal right to acquire, change and retain their nationality.

13. Ecuador had achieved universal basic education for children aged 5 to 14, with an enrolment rate of 96 per cent. The Organic Act on Intercultural Education had been adopted to guarantee non-discrimination and the Ministry of Education had worked to eradicate illiteracy, particularly among rural indigenous women, resulting in a reduction in the illiteracy rate from 9 per cent in 2001 to 3.54 per cent in 2014. Grants were available for women in higher education, where there had been an increase in the numbers studying non-traditional subjects such as physics.

14. Ecuador was also committed to guaranteeing gender equality in the workplace. For domestic workers, wages had increased, working hours had been capped and social security had been made compulsory. Of the 200,000 female domestic workers in the country, 48 per cent had social security coverage, and the number of women overall with social security coverage was growing year by year. In November 2014, the Government had proposed a law to further increase coverage and improve job security. In 2011, the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute had, for the first time, granted a widow's pension to a lesbian woman following the death of her partner. The Government also encouraged the recruitment of

persons of different nationalities through the Institute for the Ecodevelopment of the Amazon Region.

15. Investment in the health sector had increased by 84 per cent between 2006 and 2014, with particular emphasis placed on sexual and reproductive health. Numerous plans, protocols and guidelines were in place to improve maternal health and reduce maternal mortality, which had fallen significantly since 2011, thanks in part to the availability of prenatal care. The Ministry of Health had developed a programme to combat gender and sexual violence against women and girls, while health workers, whose reports could be used in legal proceedings as a means of preventing revictimization, received training in human rights and gender violence.

16. Steps had been taken to reduce adolescent pregnancies through sex education and better access to sexual health services and modern contraceptive methods, including emergency contraception, which was provided free of charge. The Ministry of Health had put in place programmes to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, notably through its 32 treatment centres offering free antiretroviral therapy and services to prevent mother-to-child transmission. It had also launched campaigns for the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of breast and cervical cancer.

17. Between 2007 and 2014, great strides had been made in the economic and social sphere, helping to lift more than 1.5 million Ecuadorians in rural and urban areas out of poverty. One component of the Government's strategy had been the Human Development Bond Cash Transfer, which provided payment for unpaid productive work. Women accounted for 95 per cent of recipients and also received financial recognition for caring for persons with disabilities. Regarding initiatives to promote women's access to income-generating activities, she drew the Committee's attention to articles 231 and 232 of the State party report and said that there were numerous plans and programmes to enhance the living conditions of rural women.

18. Women's right to equality before the law was enshrined in the Constitution, notably articles 67 and 69. Since September 2014, in response to requests from the LGBTI community, same-sex couples had been able to register their civil union on national identity cards. Lastly, the Government had endeavoured to eliminate discrimination against women in matters relating to marriage and family relations by, inter alia, guaranteeing equal rights in the administration of marital partnerships and drafting a bill amending the Civil Code to set the marriageable age at 18 years for both men and women.

Articles 1 to 6

19. **Ms. Pomeranzi** enquired about the rationale behind the decision to subsume all the pending legislative initiatives on discrimination and gender violence that had been mentioned in the State party report into the revised Criminal Code of 2014. She asked why the Code did not place greater emphasis on the reproductive rights of women, how the Code was interpreted by the traditional justice system and why abortion was still illegal except in certain exceptional cases.

20. **Ms. Haidar** asked whether the Government intended to strengthen the Council on Gender Equality to ensure local-level participation in decision-making processes and consistency among regions with regard to policy implementation.

21. **Ms. Pomeranzi** said that she would appreciate information on the extent to which women and women's NGOs were able to influence decision-making and policy implementation at the local level. The delegation should also elaborate on the budget for gender equality, which had reportedly decreased, and indicate whether there was a national authority responsible for monitoring its implementation.

22. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) said that, with regard to the legislative reform process, she wished to highlight that the domestic legal framework had historically been very dispersed and that a central aim of the reforms had been to bring various pieces of legislation together under one umbrella. That was the rationale behind the decision to subsume so many norms within the Criminal Code.

23. **Ms. Godoy** (Ecuador) said that all forms of violence against women had been criminalized in the constitutional reforms of 2008. In addition, article 81 of the new Constitution provided for the use of special expedited procedures for certain offences, including domestic violence, sexual offences, hate crimes and offences against persons who, because of their special characteristics, required greater protection. Those reforms had fuelled the discussion which had ultimately led to the incorporation within criminal legislation of conceptual definitions of all forms of violent behaviour that might constitute or contribute to the commission of an offence.

24. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador), turning to the question of abortion, said that article 45 of the new Constitution conferred upon children and adolescents the rights common to all human beings, and upon the State a duty to guarantee life, care and protection "from the moment of conception". In application of that article, the Government endeavoured to prevent any form of violence, including in the specific case of abortion. However, it also recognized its duty of care towards vulnerable women and to that end had drafted a guide to best clinical practice for the diagnosis and treatment of spontaneous and therapeutic abortion.

25. After a decade of political and institutional instability, the Government was working to build strong, stable institutions that were guided by clear, consistent, cross-cutting policies. The national equality councils established to guarantee that all policy cut across all sectors and institutions and agencies were a key component of the new apparatus.

26. **Ms. Quintana Zurita** (Ecuador) said that the Gender Equality Council worked at the highest level of government to mainstream gender in national, sectoral and intersectoral policies. It was composed of representatives of State agencies and civil society organizations. It had been allocated sufficient resources for the transition period but would face a number of challenges in the future, including capacity-building for the institutions responsible for policy implementation and for the advisory councils through which it would promote the active participation of women's organizations. Dialogue with the NGO sector was ongoing at both the national and the regional levels.

27. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) said that grassroots participation was one of the guiding principles of government initiatives and was central to the country's political consolidation. For example, local health councils cooperated with the primary health-care services throughout the country, providing a link between local communities and national-level service providers.

28. **Ms. Pomeranzi** asked how the State party ensured harmonization between institutional and traditional justice mechanisms, as well as familiarity with the Convention and the Committee's concluding observations among State officials and across society in general. She would also like precise information about the resources and functions of the Gender Equality Council, and the mechanisms through which it interacted with the highest levels of government.

29. **Ms. Pimentel** said that the text of article 45 of the Constitution did not, in her view, preclude the possibility of legal abortion in the case of pregnancies resulting from sexual violence. She urged the State party to reconsider the prohibition in cases where the law was in conflict with a woman's fundamental rights to life and physical and mental health, noting that the American Convention on Human Rights already provided for such exceptions, in

that it stipulated that the right to life should be protected by law "in general" from the moment of conception.

30. **Ms. Haidar** said that the State party should consider the need for accountability as well as authority and resources as it continued to develop the role and functions of the Gender Equality Council.

31. **Ms. Schulz** asked whether the legal bases for cases brought against clinics offering so-called de-homosexualization treatments would include the articles of the new Criminal Code that dealt with discrimination, hate crimes and abduction, and whether the State would continue to intervene until such treatments ceased to be available.

32. **Ms. Jaramillo** (Ecuador) said that the texts of all international instruments to which Ecuador was a party and the concluding observations of treaty bodies were available for public consultation via a digital platform developed with support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in fulfilment of recommendations made in the universal periodic review in 2012.

33. **Ms. Peralta** (Ecuador) said that the Council of the Judiciary had issued guidelines for domestic violence cases which took account of the cultural and patriarchal obstacles faced by women living in traditional indigenous communities. In drafting those guidelines, the bar association had sought to align the traditional forms of justice provided for in the Constitution with regular judicial mechanisms.

34. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) said that the State's budget allocation mechanism had recently been revised to facilitate gender-responsive budgeting. Social expenditure had increased four-fold under the current Government. The new equality councils made it possible to focus public policies on equality issues, since individual ministries were under an obligation to reflect the equality councils' agendas in sectoral policies.

35. The de-homosexualization treatments mentioned by Ms. Schulz had been offered by anti-addiction clinics. Having rescued over 700 persons in the course of around 120 inspections, the Ministry of Health had made it clear that treatments of that kind were not permissible. Each individual case would be duly investigated and judged in accordance with the circumstances. She undertook to ensure that Ms. Pimentel's suggestion for a less restrictive interpretation of the right of life received due consideration.

36. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari**, praising the impressive levels of representation that women had achieved in the judiciary and national government, asked what the State party was doing to attain similar levels in decentralized authorities. Since the constitutional provisions governing gender parity and alternation appeared to be identical for national and local elections and electoral lists that did not comply with those provisions were not, in principle, admissible, she was concerned that the disparities might be indicative of a lack of enforcement mechanisms.

37. She would also appreciate information about affirmative action measures being used to prevent multiple discrimination against women from indigenous, Afro-descendant and other minority communities, as well as clarification as to how the provisions on the situation of carers and family makers in the Organic Act on the Grassroots Economy and Solidarity served to advance the status of women and in what way they constituted temporary special measures.

38. **Ms. Acar** asked what the State party was doing to eliminate discriminatory social and cultural norms and modify stereotypical conceptions of male and female roles, as it was required to do under article 5 of the Convention. Information about any specific campaigns would be appreciated. The State party also needed to take action to prohibit the marriage of girls as young as 12, as currently permitted in the Civil Code. Such marriages implied support for women's subordination and should be viewed as forced marriages. She asked

when the Civil Code would be amended to eliminate those harmful and discriminatory provisions.

39. **Ms. Pimentel** said that, while the adoption of the National Plan to Eradicate Gender Violence was a positive step, amendments to the legislative framework for combating such violence were still required. For example, the Criminal Code failed to establish the special expedited procedures which, according to the Constitution, should be used for offences of intrafamily sexual violence. As a result, the victims of such offences had to endure the convoluted, emotionally draining four-stage procedure established for criminal offences such as fraud, robbery and murder. The precautionary measures envisaged in the national plan should also be defined more precisely in law.

40. She would also like to know: whether a specific budget had been assigned to implementation of the National Plan; whether the overall budget for combating domestic violence had been increased following the Plan's adoption; whether civil society was involved in its implementation; and what measures were in place to ensure that incidents of sexual violence in schools were duly investigated and penalized.

41. **Ms. Leinarte**, referring to the obstacles to effective implementation of the national plan against trafficking in persons which the State party had highlighted in its replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/ECU/8-9/Add.1), said that more detailed and up-to-date information on the specific working agendas reportedly adopted to overcome those obstacles was needed. She asked whether work to create a national database that used more precise indicators was under way, and whether the 2014 amendments to the Criminal Code which permitted wiretapping and undercover investigation and doubled the minimum sentence for traffickers had yielded observable results in the prevention of trafficking. She would also like details of the legal alternatives to the repatriation of foreign victims of trafficking established in the new Criminal Code, and of any provisions that might allow those victims to remain in Ecuador, at least temporarily, without being vulnerable to sexual and other forms of exploitation. Were the services provided to them through the network of non-specialized government centres and shelters adequate? Lastly, she asked to what extent prostitution was considered legal in Ecuador, what measures were in place to monitor the activities of brothels, and whether any support was available to women wishing to leave prostitution.

42. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) said that women remained underrepresented in politics at the local level, in particular in provincial government.

43. **Ms. Godoy** (Ecuador) said that in recent years the proportion of female political candidates had increased to 25 per cent. The issue of single-person electoral lists had opened up a debate on the reform of democratic practices. New electoral processes would be established in 2019: in the interim there would be much discussion on how to encourage women's participation.

44. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) said, with regard to women at work, that quotas were in place for the employment of women, which were monitored by the Ministry of Labour Relations. A mechanism had been set up to provide women entrepreneurs with credit, which could come in the form of monthly transfers or a lump sum. Efforts were being made to extend social security coverage to women who had previously fallen outside the system, such as own-account workers and women doing unpaid work in the home, for example as carers. On measures to eradicate gender stereotypes, she said that community outreach campaigns were being run. Steps were being taken to end sexual violence in education, and education on gender-based violence was being conducted for those employed in the public sector, including medical staff, paramedics and teachers.

45. **Ms. Godoy** (Ecuador) said that the new Criminal Code provided for special procedures in cases of sexual violence, domestic violence or hate crimes, and for crimes

against children, the elderly, or people with special needs. Victims of those offences had the right to special protection, including compensation and witness protection schemes. In physical examinations, for example, or the taking of witness statements, victims of domestic violence and sexual offences were given special treatment, different from the treatment of victims of other offences, so as to avoid revictimization. One of the results of the criminal law reform had been the establishment of special units within the prosecution service to deal with domestic or family violence.

46. **Ms. Peralta** (Ecuador) said that, under the revised Criminal Code, special units had been established in prosecutorial services to address violence against women and domestic violence. Those units comprised a multidisciplinary team, including judges with training on domestic violence, social workers, psychologists and specially trained physicians. Measures were in place to expedite trials in cases of domestic violence. An agreement had been concluded between the three branches of government, which made for a harmonized, cross-sectoral approach to addressing domestic violence.

47. **Ms. Godoy** (Ecuador) said that measures were being taken to revise legislation in order to raise the legal minimum age of marriage to 18, in line with the age of majority. As to violence against women and the family, "violence" was considered to be any act of psychological, physical or sexual ill-treatment, while "family" was defined as partners, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins, and any person with conjugal or cohabitation links with the accused.

48. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) said that steps were being taken to provide gender equality and non-discrimination training for civil servants in the executive and judicial branches.

49. **Ms. Jaramillo** (Ecuador) said that the national plan against trafficking was led by the Ministry of the Interior and had three components: prevention; protection and restitution of the rights of victims; and investigation and punishment. In 2014, 70 victims of trafficking had been rescued and criminal charges had been brought in 40 cases. A national campaign to raise awareness of the crime of trafficking was being run by the Ministry of the Interior: it included work with schools and outreach among poor and indigenous families. Labour trafficking had been eliminated, as had begging among children. Safe houses had been established for victims, and efforts were made to ensure family reunification.

50. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) said that her Government acknowledged the importance of action to address sexual abuse in the education system. Measures were in place to provide immediate support for victims of sexual violence and provide any medical assistance they might require. There were some 3,500 student counsellors' units around the country. Procedures were in place to protect student victims in the event of sexual abuse by a teacher or employee in the education system, and to ensure that complaints received a response within 48 hours. If found guilty of abuse, the staff member would be dismissed and the student concerned would receive counselling. Turning to the issue of prostitution, she said that mechanisms had been put in place by the Ministry of Health to provide monthly sexual and reproductive health checks for sex workers and to inspect brothels to ensure that health standards were met.

51. **Ms. Peralta** (Ecuador) said that measures had been taken to raise awareness of gender issues among members of the judiciary at all levels: more than 700 judges and prosecutors and more than 1,000 clerical and technical staff had received training.

52. **Ms. Pimentel** asked whether members of the judiciary received training on the content of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations, in particular general recommendations Nos. 19 and 24. While she welcomed information on measures to streamline responses to cases of domestic and gender-based violence, she wondered how

protection was guaranteed for women victims of violence who went to the police to report cases, rather than to the prosecutor's office, since they were no longer able to obtain immediate protection from the police but would have to wait until they got to the prosecutor's office.

53. **Ms. Schulz** asked whether the extended penalty for the crime of femicide might be considered discriminatory, since it was so much heavier than the penalty for homicide, and whether that could impede Ecuador's efforts to combat violence against women. She asked how the State party would ensure the standardized application of the provision across the country: how could it be proved that the victim had been killed on grounds of gender?

54. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** pointed out that while the new social security framework to cover women working outside the formal labour market was necessary and very welcome, it did not constitute a temporary special measure under the Convention.

55. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** asked how consistency in addressing multiple discrimination was ensured by the various State bodies concerned. She asked how the State party worked with the media to overcome stereotypes and stigmatization, particularly in respect of female migrants.

56. **Ms. Leinarte** requested further information on the new provisions to address trafficking in persons and the safe return of victims under the revised Criminal Code. She asked whether safe houses were open to victims of trafficking only or to all victims of violence.

57. **Ms. Peralta** (Ecuador) said that training courses on violence against women and violence in the family were provided for members of the judiciary at all levels and contained information on the provisions of the Convention. The special police stations for women that had existed before the revision of the Criminal Code had been replaced by family violence units in prosecutorial services in cities. Consideration was being given to how to extend that system to remote areas and involve the health-care sector, to ensure the widest and most comprehensive support possible for victims.

58. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) added that the Committee's general recommendations were also covered in training courses for the judiciary.

59. **Ms. Godoy** (Ecuador) said that articles 141 and 142 of the new Criminal Code defined aggravating circumstances specific to the crime of femicide that made it possible for such crimes to be prosecuted and tried as crimes of gender violence and not as homicide.

60. **Ms. Peralta** (Ecuador) said that a streamlined, coordinated procedure was in place to investigate and try cases of femicide and hand down convictions.

61. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) said that her Government considered social security to be a fundamental right for all citizens and was therefore taking action to include women formerly excluded from social security coverage. A number of strategies were in place to address multiple discrimination, including a new media law that promoted inclusiveness and prohibited and penalized discrimination on any grounds. To date five court rulings had been issued in that regard. Strategies to counter discrimination were being forged in various sectors, including with regard to equal access to housing, education and health care. The National Plan to Eradicate Gender Violence against Women, Children and Adolescents provided for a cross-sectoral approach to truly eliminate gender discrimination.

62. **Ms. Jaramillo** (Ecuador) said implementation of the National Plan was coordinated by the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Religious Affairs and took a four-pronged approach: changing cultural practices and patterns through public awareness-raising and training for public servants, including teachers, medical professionals, the judiciary and law enforcement officers; ensuring access to justice for victims of gender violence through the

specialized units for family violence; providing protection for victims through a network of shelters run by NGOs and funded by the Government; and gathering strategic information through the national census and other forms of data collection. A permanent mechanism for dialogue had been established between the institutions dealing with the administration of justice in cases of gender-based violence. The Ministry assessed objective information received through that process, in order to identify and overcome any barriers to justice for women in situations of domestic violence, an approach that had already yielded positive results.

Articles 7 to 9

63. **Ms. Acosta Vargas** asked whether the question of women's participation in politics was addressed in schools to ensure that girls learned about the importance of participating in political life, at the local and national levels and through NGOs, and were made aware of their right to autonomous decision-making. She asked whether the Government actively invited women to participate in political life and encouraged them to take up positions of leadership and responsibility. With regard to international representation, she asked what percentage of senior international positions were held by women, and whether any efforts were made to promote the participation of women of indigenous origin or African descent.

64. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) said that the Constitution and revised legislation on education provided for equal participation for all in all spheres of society. Girls and boys alike were educated about their right to be involved in various aspects of life in Ecuador, including politics. Girls' participation in extracurricular education, such as sports, cultural and recreational activities, was encouraged. There were a large number of women in international delegations from Ecuador.

65. **Ms. Espinosa** (Ecuador) said that in 2013 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Integration had for the first time made a specific appeal for men and women from indigenous communities to apply for certain positions. Regarding the diplomatic service, over the past seven years the number of women heads of foreign missions had increased dramatically, as had the representation of women from indigenous communities.

66. **Ms. Vaca Jones** (Ecuador) added that a woman had also been designated to head the Ministry of National Defence.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.